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The Preface.

IT is matter of sorrowful Observation, That *New-England's* primitive Ways are not now seen among us in their former Glory and Beauty ; but we have too sadly *lost our first Love* : and Customs, of ill fame, very inconsistent with that Profession we make of the purest Reformation, are visibly spreading in the midst of us.

IN particular, it is for a Lamentation, that many Persons do unnecessarily frequent *Taverns* and *Publick Houses* ; even to a Scandal, and to the manifest Prejudice and Hindrance of all Godliness and Honesty.

WE do therefore hold our selves oblig'd, in faithfulness to our great Lord & Master, the Credit of the Gospel, and the Welfare of precious Souls, to joyn in the following *Serious Address* to our Neighbours. Which, some of us having had the Composing, and others the Perusal of, we all concur to the Scope & Substance; as apprehending it to be a seasonable and needful Testimony: And do earnestly (in the Meekness of *C H R I S T*, and yet with his Authority) exhort all into whose hands it may come, *Those* particularly who are under our more immediate Inspection and Charge, (for whose Souls we would watch as they that must give Account; that we may do it with Joy, and not with Grief; for that is unprofitable for them) to take what is here offer'd, into their most serious Consideration, and to submit their Consciences unto the Mind and Will of GOD, as it is herein presented to them.

THE Address is made in this most publick manner; Partly because if there be any so *secret* in their practice of the Evil witness'd against, as to escape our Notice and personal Applications, we hope this Admonition by the way of the *Press*, may find them out: Partly also that those upon whom a transient oral Discourse is apt to make but little Impression, may by having a *printed* one in their hands,

The P R E F A C E. iii

hands, have opportunity more *deliberately* to weigh our Advice : And partly that we might in this way *reach* those whom we can't speak to from the *Pulpit*.

THIS Admonition is primarily intended for *Christian Professors*, of whom we wou'd hope that some are among the Faithful in CHRIST ; who will be disposed to say with the Royal Psalmist, *Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a Kindness* ———. And as Brethren, we wou'd restore such in the spirit of *meekness*, considering our selves as Men subject to like passions with others. Yet it must be observ'd, that in the course of this Address, here and there are mingled some occasional Hints, more especially pointed at the grossly *Scandalous*, who deserve to be *sharply rebuked*, and often have been.

WE wou'd not be understood to involve all that are faulty, in one common Charge of Guilt, without distinction : or to impute every ill property and effect of the Tavern-meetings, in the same degree, to every one. Nor is it design'd to cast *Reproach* on any particular Persons ; but We sincerely aim (by the Grace of GOD) at the Reforming of such as are fallen into so unhappy a Practice, and the Warning of others who are like to be *ensnared*.

iv The P R E F A C E.

WE beseech all concern'd, solemnly to examine themselves, to ponder the path of their feet, and prove their own ways; and make particular application of the Reproofs and Warnings here given, as an inform'd Conscience shall direct: Awfully remembering this matter will quickly be judg'd according to the Gospel, at the enlighten'd Tribunal of CHRIST, *Whose We are, and whom we serve.*

Sept. 29.

1726.

Samuel Checkley
William Cooke
William Waldron
Nathanael Cotton
Joshua Gee
John Greenwood.

Cotton Mather
Benjamin Wadsworth
Peter Thacher
John Danforth
Nehemiah Walter
Eliphalet Adams
Peter Thacher
Israel Loring
John Avery
Joseph Sewall
Thomas Prince
Ebenezer Thayer
John Webb
John Cotton
Nathanael Appleton
William Cooper
Thomas Foxcroft

2 JY 61



A serious Address

To those who needlessly frequent
Taberns & Publick Houses.

B R E T H R E N,



It is an apprehension of Duty, with a Love to your Souls, which engages us in the present Testimony against an evil Practice growing among us,—The needlessly resorting to *Taberns*, and spending much precious Time (particularly the Evening) in *Publick Houses*: A Practice, which we can't but think is of dangerous Tendency, of a criminal Aspect, and of too bad Report for Professors of Religion to indulge themselves in; and therefore we cannot but in faithfulness warn you against it. Brethren, We are jealous over you with a godly Jealousy; and are afraid lest by any means, as the *Serpent* beguiled *Eve* by his Subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in **CHRIST**; as the Apostle spake to his Friends at *Corinth*, not in the Language of Prejudice & Disaffection, but of his abundant Love and good Will to them. We fear what Mischiefs & Ruins such a Practice may bring on many, whose best Interests we are very much concern'd for; if there be not a reasonable stop put unto it.

Therefore we beseech you, Friends, suffer the Exhortation, which we now bring you, in the name & fear of **GOD**, with no other Aim but at his Glory, and
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y our everlasting Good. O that our Counsel may be acceptable to you! We wou'd speak the words of Truth & Soberness. GOD by his Blessing make them words of Power; and make us wise Reprovers upon obedient Ears!

Come then & let us reason together. Hear now and consider, while we plead with you. It is an important Case we are upon, and we intreat you to allow it an impartial & serious Trial. Will you give us leave to expostulate the matter with a just freedom, and with all plainness of Speech, under the following particulars.

First, Are you not chargeable with a very faulty *Mis-pence* of *T I M E*, while you go so often, and tarry so long at the Tavern, or other publick Houses!

Do you not very often spend your long Hours there, without dispatching any Business at all; without doing or getting any real Good, whether as to Estate, Body, or Soul; without serving any of the valuable Ends of the Rational Life, much less of the Christian! Hence, Is it not a sort of more solemn Idleness you are guilty of! And then, Is it not an Aggravation, that you spend so many Hours in your Tavern-Interviews! The Frequency and Length adds not a little to the Guilt & Mischief of them, by a dreadful Consumption of precious Time; which is a Talent we must all Account for, and being but of short Continuance, we hadn't need be prodigal of it. Brethren, the Time is short, and much of it runs off in Sleep, and in necessary Refreshments, and unavoidable Avocations from Business. Instead therefore of contriving Methods to pass away the Time which remains, you had need study all possible ways to *redeem* it, by doing *with Might* what your hands find to do *. O then do not lavish away any more of your swift and uncertain and irretrievable Hours in Amusement & Impertinence. Carefully gather up the fragments of Time, that nothing be lost. Talk not of *spare-Hours*, — that you can afford the Time, or that you take only the *Evening* to refresh your selves after the Labours of a weary

* Eccl. 9. 10.

Day, &c. — Behold ye trust in words that cannot profit. They of old imagined a vain thing, who said †, *We are delivered to do these things.* Think not to pass such Accounts with your righteous Judge in the great Day. Is it nothing to squander away whole Evenings, almost every Day, in mere Sloth & Diversion! Will not the Reckoning swell high at the Year's end! If all your lost Hours were put together, how great a Sum would they amount to! Surely too great to obtain the Divine Allowance. — And do you consider (Sirs) that you have much weighty Business (besides your secular Affairs) lying upon your hands, which bespeaks the most diligent, the most vigorous Application of all your Powers; being eno' of it self (had you no other Concern) to fill up the narrow space of this short Life! Can't you think of many things you have to do, which you would not have Death come & find *undone*? And don't those things therefore loudly call for the precious Hours that you let slide away *as a Tale that is told*? — O Friends, consider the noble & superior Ends of human Life. Consider how swiftly your important Minutes fly away, and none of them can be recovered: One single Moment, when past, can't be recal'd; cannot be purchas'd. *What shall a Man give in Exchange?* It cannot be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the price thereof. Verily the Price of it is above Rubies. — So *damned Ghosts* think; who doubtless would give all the World (were it theirs) for those probational Opportunities, which we are now in the happy Possession of, but (alas!) do too foolishly idle away. — O let us learn to value our *Day of Grace*, hitherto prolonged, more than we have done: and let the very Tho't of *Pass-time* be as abhor'd, as it is absurd, and let it not be *once named* among us, as becometh Saints. Let us look on ourselves as Pilgrims & Strangers upon Earth, and pass the time of our sojourning here in Fear; looking for & hastning unto the coming of the Day of GOD.

† Jer. 7. 10. || I Pet. 1. 17. --- || 3. 12.

BUT to proceed,

Secondly, The *MONER* that usually goes to support the Expences of these Interviews at the Tavern, Can there any *good Account* be given of it?

Remember, Sirs, You are but *Stewards*, and are accountable for all the Bounties of Divine Providence to you; and the Time is hastning on, when it will be said to each of you, *Give an Account* of thy Stewardship; for thou shalt be *no longer Steward* *. And how dreadful will it be then to be found to have *wasted* your Lord's Goods! — Think not to say within your selves, We have Money *enough and to spare*; can allow our selves these Pocket-Expences, without any Injury to our Estates or Families —. Be it so: Yet consider, since you are but Stewards, it behoves you to see to it that you don't pervert your Estates, the Gains of your Callings, or any part of them, to wrong Uses; as you will answer it another Day. Surely you are grossly deceiv'd, if you imagine you have such Superfluities to employ upon unnecessary and idle Diversions. Make a *Computation* (we pray you) of your Tavern-Expences, at the most moderate & lowest Rate; and we are persuaded it will, by the Year's End, rise to no *inconsiderable Sum*: and then think with your selves whether it might not be apply'd to purposes more excellent & desirable! Remember, *the Poor you have always with you* †, and these *Gleanings* should be left for the Poor & the Stranger, for the Fatherless and the Widow ‡. Have you *Bread to the full*? It's pity any thing shou'd be thrown away, when there's many a poor hungry *Lazarus*, that would willingly accept the Crumbs which fall from your Tables. Does your *Cup run over*? 'Tis pity it shou'd run *waste*, when there are so many thirsty Souls wou'd be glad of the Overplus —. But then besides this of Charity, there are other pious Uses, to which the Filings of your Gold might be consecrated; and become *Sacrifices* || which GOD is well-pleased with, and be found unto Praise & Honour and Glory, when the *Books* of GOD come to be open'd, and you be judged from the things found written there.

* Luke 16.2. † Mat. 25.11. ‡ Deut. 24.21. || Heb. 13.16.

After all, It may be many of you that spend too much at these Interviews, have but little to spare, without actually injuring your Families, or defrauding the Poor, or robbing GOD's Altar. Now therefore there is *utterly a Fault among you* —. We write not these things to *shame* you (unless it be to shame you out of your evil Custom) but as Brethren *we warn you* *. And above all we warn you against throwing away your Money and Time in sinful Gaming.

Thirdly, Is there not often a faulty *Waste of WORDS*, and much *vain Conversation*, at these Tavern-Interviews?

Judge within your selves. Did you set such a Watch before your Mouths, and keep the Door of your Lips, as you ought; wou'd they not be employed in more profitable & reputable Discourse, than is commonly heard at the Tavern? Is the Talk there such, that if our glorious *LORD*, who verily *stands at the Door* †, and hearkens and hears, should appear to you, as he did once to two of his Disciples, while they were Communing together, and audibly demand, || *What manner of Communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye sit & are merry?*—Or if one should with his Pen unobserv'd minute down what passes among you, and then repeat all to you; Are your Conferences upon such valuable Subjects, and under that wise Management, that upon a serious Reflection, you would not find Cause to say with *Ezra* ‡ *O my God, I blush and am ashamed* —!

Have you such Discourse ordinarily among you, as hath a Tendency, in any measure, to improve you in vital Piety, or in solid useful Knowledge? Is any of your Time taken up in forming Projections to advance the Kingdom of *CHRIST*, and to serve your Generation according to the Will of *GOD*? Or rather, are not the Company often so disposed, that such kind of Discourse is banish'd out of the Conversation, as a disagreeable mixture, and a sort of Profanity!

Alas! What are the Discourses that swallow up your Tavern-Hours! How seldom after a long Evenings Talk,

* 1 Cor. 4, 14. † Jam 5. 9. || Luke 24. 17. ‡ Ezra 9. 6.
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can you upon Recollection find many Words passed, that you come away the *wiser* or the *better* for? Can't you condemn your selves many times for taking too great a Liberty of Speech, and not conversing together as *becometh Saints*! While some have affected to appear gay & facetious, have they not many times bewray'd much Vanity & indecent Lightness! When sometimes *vain Persons* have dropt into the Company, Tatlers, Busy-bodies, who bridle not their Tongues, but open wide their Mouths, of deceitful Matters, speaking things which they ought not, against their Neighbours; or when Men of corrupt Principles, unruly and vain Talkers, that speak Evil of the way of Truth, and are ready to turn all Religion into Banter; or Men of unclean Lips, addicted to Filthiness, and foolish Talking and Jestings which is not convenient; when such (we say) have fallen into your Company, have you not too oft given an approving Laugh or Smile upon their evil Chat, and many times been insensibly drawn in, to bear a part, and keep up the vain Conversation?

How apt is empty, impertinent, trifling Discourse to insinuate into such Meetings: and how natural, how easy the Transition from light & airy, to vicious and evil Communication; of an uncharitable Strain, of a factious Tendency, of an obscene Tincture, or a profane Aspect, and the like!

But *think ye this to be right*? Or consider ye, that a *Book of Remembrance* is written †, out of which you must one Day be Judged of the Lord? Verily there is not a Word in your Tongue, but Lo! *He knoweth it altogether* ‡. O remember the Admonition of your Judge & Saviour; * *A good Man* out of the good Treasure of his heart, bringeth forth *good Things*; and an evil Man out of his evil Treasure, bringeth forth evil Things. But I say unto you, That every *idle Word* that Men shall speak, they shall give *Account* thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

† *Mal.* 3. 16. ‡ *Psal.* 139. 4. * *Matth.* 12. 35, &c.

Fourthly, Do you not by this unhappy Practice put yourselves in the way of *Temptation*, and become exposed to many *Dangers*?

It is written || *Let him that thinketh he stands, take heed lest he fall: neither let us tempt Christ* —. We shou'd beware of Sin, and of every thing that looks like it, or leads to it; should guard against all the Occasions and Incentives of Sin; shou'd watch & pray that we enter not into *Temptation*: and besure then we shou'd be cautious that we don't at any time voluntarily or unnecessarily put ourselves in the way of *Temptations*. This is to lay our selves open to the power of Satan, and forfeit the Divine Protection.

Now, Brethren, judge ye, whether Taverns and such like Houles are not generally Places of *Temptation*, much *Temptation*. We appeal to your own Consciences and impartial Reflections & Experience.

Do you not find your selves there in hazard of falling into the *Company of ill Persons*; and so of contracting a dangerous Acquaintance, of learning their pernicious ways, or at least of suffering Sin upon them!

Are you not also in danger of making too near Approaches to the Sin of *Intemperance*, while you sit surrounded with *Temptations* to it? Don't you run the hazard of being drawn on, before you are aware, from a more transient Chat over the Glafs, to a Tarrying long at the Wine; from taking a Sip, to swallowing down a Draught; and from one Draught to another, until at the last, it bite like a Serpent and sting like an Adder!

If any one say, I have long been of a Club, and used the Tavern for many Years, and found no such snare in it: — To such we reply, If so in fact, You have abundant Reason to adore & magnify the *Grace of GOD*, by which you have hitherto been *with-held*; but then remember, you may trespass too far, you may presume too long, and by grieving the Divine Spirit, may provoke Him to leave you, and so you'll become an easy Prey to your subtil & powerful Tempter. O be not high-minded, but fear. And take heed * lest any of you be

|| 1 Cor. 10. 9, 12. * Heb. 3. 13.

hardned

hardned thro' the *deceitfulness of Sin*. Again, How harmless soever your Discourses may have been hitherto, yet are you not in *danger* of running into *bad Discourse*? Is not the *Tongue* said † to be an *unruly Evil*? And do you not many times find it to be so by unhappy Experience & Observation? Had you not need therefore keep up a very careful *Watch* over it; and fly all Provocations to ill Language; and by consequence not unnecessarily go into those Places & Companies, where you will be peculiarly expos'd to Temptation?

Moreover, While you attend this free Conversation at the Tavern, where Men use to put themselves pretty much off their Guard, and allow themselves a Latitude; Are you not in danger of being impos'd upon by designing Persons, and unwarily carry'd into false Notions of Men & Things? Or of leading others into them, by making wrong Representations your selves?

In fine, Are you not in danger of contracting an *incurable Habit*? Custom breeds Delight; 'tis a kind of *second Nature*: and what's natural, we are easily led to upon every recurring occasion, and are apt to make other things stoop, & give way to it. Here then is your danger, very much, lest by accustoming your selves to these Tavern-Conferences, your Mind & Heart become too closely engag'd, so that you'll be almost irresistibly driven along to them, even when important Business calls you elsewhere, and will not be able (it may be) ever to break off the delightful Haunt! A captivating Diversion surely must needs be very dangerous to a Christian: And a *Prudent Man* foreseeing the Evil, *hideth himself* ||. Wherefore be ye not unwise, *neither give place to the Devil* †. Break off before you are too far engag'd. Remember that wise Conclusion & Resolve of the *Apostle's*, "All things that are lawful for me, are not expedient; and I will not be brought under the power of any*." Shun the Place where you find so many Snares of the Enemy laid for you. Peter got his Fall by Presumption †. You have to do with an *Adversary* that is too vigilant

† James 3. 8. || Prov. 22. 3. † Eph. 4. 27. * 2 Cor. 6. 11.

† Mark 14. 66.

to lose an Opportunity, or forego any Advantage put into his hands. Be not ignorant of his Devices *, lest he get an Advantage against you. Endeavour, we beseech you, to prevent all these Evils, which so compass you round, by a speedy & resolute Flight from the Tavern.

Fifthly, Have you not already felt the *ill Effects* of this unhappy Custom, with regard to your *spiritual* and *best Interests*; and known others ruin'd by it? O Christians, Don't you sensibly find it warring against your Souls, and hindring you from a close Walk with GOD? The mispense of precious Time, vain Discourse, presumptuous venturing among the Occasions of Sin, &c. are they not such Faults as grieve the holy Spirit of GOD ||? And Oh! How many have by such things sinned away divine Restraints; been at last given over to their own Lusts, and left off to be wise & to do Good!

These things indeed have a *natural* Tendency to corrupt good Manners, to inspire the Mind with Vanity, and unfit Men for Communion with GOD. Carnal Diversions too often repeated have a pernicious Influence, to sensualise the Soul, to dissolve and weaken it's Powers, to bring a fatal Damp on virtuous Inclinations, and indispose us to all that's solemn and serious. The Duties of the *Closet* are like then to be but very poorly perform'd, after an Evening mispent in idle Chatt, or worse, at a Tavern. By this means you not only leave but little space for Religious Exercises, and so are tempted to croud them up in haste for want of Time; but also take a Method to render your selves averse to them, and by consequence very perfunctory in them, to the dishonour of GOD, and the wronging of your own Souls; which will never thrive & flourish, but must needs be lean from day to day, so long as secret Devotions are either neglected, or but trifled in. Closet-Duties (Prayer, Reading the Scriptures, Meditation, &c.) attended as they ought to be, are some of the most excellent Means of growth in Grace. And they that are so wise for their Souls, as all should be, will

* 2 Cor. 2. 11. || Eph. 4. 30.

give themselves to these things in their Season, and study to redeem as much Time as they can for them. And judge ye, whether the Time you spend at the Tavern, and in particular the *Evening*, which is one of the peculiar Seasons of Devotion, wou'd not be spent to much better purpose, and turn to far better Account in the Day of Reckoning, if devoted (in part, at least) to sacred Retirements! Or, if it were employ'd in *religious Associations*, in reforming Societies, and the like; wou'd not this be abundantly more for your Satisfaction both at present and hereafter? Nay, if you employ'd the Time (part of it) in reading of *History*, or studying any pleasant & useful *Science*, to cultivate your Knowledge, and furnish you to do greater Services for your Generation: or in friendly *Visits* among sober and good Neighbours, under a wise & christian Management, and seasonably concluded; wou'd not this be much more for your present Edification, and future Peace & Comfort!

Men & Brethren, We wou'd not be misunderstood, as if we meant to insinuate, that a due Pursuit of Religion is inconsistent with all manner of *Diversion*: No, We suppose there are Diversions undoubtedly innocent, yea profitable & of use, to fit us for Service, by enlivening & fortifying our frail Nature, invigorating the Animal Spirits, and brightning the Mind, when tired with a close Application to Business. — But then consider, the most harmless Recreations may become very culpable, and hurtful, for want of observing proper *Rules*, with regard to the *Time, Place, Company, Manner*, &c. These are weighty Circumstances, & call for a more careful Observation, than is commonly found among Men, in the ordering of their Diversions. Multitudes take such lawless Liberties in this case, as if they were left to the uncertain Conduct of mere Humour & Fancy. But alas! Sirs, GOD expects that in every thing you shew your selves *Men*, and act under the Government of Reason & Virtue; and accordingly that you make Choice of such Diversions as are most convenient; that you be always sparing of them; that you time them well; regulate them prudently, make them

them give place to Business, make them subserve Religion, and so minister to the great Ends of human Life, the Glory of GOD, and the Good of Men. Happy the Man that has this wise Art of sanctifying his Recreations, and doing these common Actions *after a godly sort!* But alas! We fear this is a very *rare* Attainment. Few have the Skill to avoid, or Strength to resist the Temptations that mingle themselves with their Diversions. They drink down Poison in their pleasant Cups, and perceive it not. They take Fire into their Bosoms, and hug it there, until at the last they mourn, when their Flesh is consumed, and their Souls destroy'd! Carnal Pleasures have prov'd some of the most fatal Impediments to Religion; have carry'd many down headlong to Hell, and exceedingly retarded others in their Progress to Heaven. In particular, the Diversions of the *Tavern* have been very mischievous. Multitudes who had *begun in the Spirit*, & made a *fair shew*, have lost their Religion there, & *ended in the Flesh*. Have you not seen in your day, *amazing Instances* hereof? And have you not known others, that perhaps have not totally fallen away, who yet from their first lifting into a Club, have visibly declined in their Zeal & Watchfulness, and become less disposed for such religious Exercises and Societies as once they bore a figure in! — We beseech you, make a stand, and suffer Conscience to enter into these Inquiries, & give a faithful Report. Let every Man prove his own Work; and be not deceived. Fear, lest any of you shou'd *seem to come short*. Fly the Places of Temptation, where so many have, 'ere they were aware, been betray'd into Sin & Ruin; *considering thy self, lest thou also be not only tempted and entangled, but even overcome*, and the latter End be worse with thee than the Beginning!

Sixthly, Is not *Family-Order & Religion* much obstructed & hurt, by these Evening-Interviews at Publick Houses?

What good Order is there like to be in that Family, where the Master or Father is usually all the Evening abroad at the Tavern, and sometimes tarries late?

Are not the Children and Servants likely to wander from home too, and will not they be tempted to tarry out late, at least sometimes, if the Heads of the Family do it? And if one Head does it, will not the other be apt to do it also? But what Confusion must there needs be in such a House! And how must Disorders grow in a Town, where there are many such Houses, as ^{it} were left desolate! How much more, if it were the univertal Practice, and almost every Family were usually at Evening in such a Case! The Heads abroad! And the Young People abroad! Some here, others there; and all upon their Diversions! What a melancholy Gloom wou'd this cast upon the Town! How doleful the Appearance! Can you bear the Tho't of it! But now why may not *all* run into the Practice, if it be justifiable in to many & such Persons as do allow themselves in it? And who knows how *extensive* the Infection of your ill *Example* may be? (of which we shall speak more particularly under the next Article.) Surely then a Regard to the Welfare & Reputation of the Town, a Reverence for Order, as well as a serious View to the Benefit of your Children & Servants shou'd constrain you to leave off the evil Custom. And indeed a just Respect for your Consorts, should influence you to spend your Evenings at home as much as necessary Business will allow. May we not in this case apply that Admonition of the Apostle *Peter*? * Ye Husbands, *dwell* with your Wives, according to *Knowledge*, giving *Honour* unto the Wife as unto the weaker Vessel, and as being Heirs together of the Grace of Life, that *your Prayers be not hindred*.

The Apostle *Paul* exhorts Parents & Masters, to love their Wives & Children, and give unto their Servants that which is just & equal; and (therefore) to *continue* in Prayer, and *watch* in the same with Thanksgiving; *withal* Praying †, praying together, or joyntly, as the word in the Original might be rendred. It is a Precept for Joynt Prayer in the Family. And they are Prayers in the Family, Prayers of the Husband with his

* 1 Pet. 3. 7. † Col. 3. 3.

Wife and Household, that the Apostle *Peter* was desirous should not be *hinder'd*; and therefore exhorts Men to *dwell* with their Wives according to *Knowledge*, giving *Honour* to them.

But do not you, our Friends, fail of a due Respect to your Consorts, while you so constantly prefer the Entertainments of Tavern-Conversation, before the Pleasure of their Company?—And then do you not take an unhappy Method to *hinder* your Family-Prayers by this Custom? If it don't breed Contention, yet it shou'd seem, it must needs too often infer Disorder, and hurt the Devotions of the Household; especially if you tarry out late in the Evening, as we fear the manner of some is. Do you not hereby lose one special Opportunity for the Instruction of your Households? And do you not take a Course to disfit yourselves too much for the Duties of GOD's Worship? When the Evening hath been consum'd in Vanity, and the best Season in it for Family-Worship passed away, are not the Duties of it like to be (in part, at least) jostled out or hurry'd over in a slighty drowsy manner; be but lean Sacrifices, & of little Account with the Holy GOD, who has said, *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.* “When the the Strength & Spirits of the Mind have “been laid out on the World, in the Day, and wasted “on trifling Diversions in the Evening, what remains “but Indifference & Lukewarmness, for Objects of a “religious Concern! As you may observe, those Trees “that run out into abundance of grosser *Shoots*, seldom “bear much valuable *Fruit*, because all the best Juices “go to maintain those useless Luxuriances.

To conclude this Head, We pray you seriously to reflect on what you read of *David*, that Man of GOD, and of the People of *Israel*:—After the Labours of the Day, in removing the Ark *, *All the People departed every one to his House: Then David returned to bless his Household.* And wou'd it not be well for you, O our Friends, if you wou'd go & do likewise? Instead of going from the Warehouse, the Shop (or Field)

* 2 Sam. 6. 19, 20.

to the Tavern; from Business, to insnaring Diversions; had you not better *return* (with *David*) to *bless* your *Households*; even to blest them with your Prayers, and Counsils, and good Conversation in CHRIST! It is written †, The Commandments of the Lord, Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them, *when thou sittest in thy House*; when thou liest down, & when thou risest up. Hear therefore, O *Israel*, & observe to do it. O that there were such an Heart in every Householder, that there might in it's Season be more of *a Sitting in the House*; that they wou'd keep *their Foot*, & look better to the ways of their Household; that it might be well with them, and with their Children for ever!

Seventhly, Mayn't the *Example* you set, be of ill Influence, & hurtful to Others?

Example is a very attractive thing; especially *bad Example*: This is a *Root of Bitterness*, which wherever it springs up, is generally fruitful of pernicious Effects, and thereby many are defiled; many destroy'd. It is like *Leven*, which works secretly, insinuates it self insensibly, and spreads very swiftly. It's like the noisome *Pestilence*, which silently assaults Men, and yet with a mighty Power, & mortally wounds, almost before we suspect any Danger. Especially bad Examples set by Persons of *Note* & in superior Rank, or making a *peculiar Profession* of Religion, or pretending to be Men of higher *Knowledge*, &c. do carry with them an extraordinary Contagion. By ill Examples, whole Communities have sometimes been endanger'd, & Cities bro't into a Snare. By this means often *one Offender destroys much Good*. And the Example of Professors & Superiours, particularly in this matter of needless frequenting the *Tavern*, and spending the Evening there, we fear will be & has been of mischievous Consequence.

Has it not a Tendency to *harden the Wicked*, who are apt to justify themselves by the Example of others, especially of their Betters, against the known Laws

† Deut. 6. 7.

of Virtue & Wisdom! Do you not in a sort herd your selves with the debauched Crew, while you so constantly go to the Place of *their Resort*? Do you not too much conform to this World, and in a sense sit with vain Persons, by frequenting the same Houses that they haunt; by sitting so often on the Drunkards Bench and in the Seat of the Scorned? And tho' you run not with them to the same Excess of Riot; yet is there not exceeding hazard, that your so far Symbolizing with them, will embolden them in their Wickedness? And are you not like to become (in another & worse sense, than that in which it was said of David) *the Song of Drunkards*, their Joy & Laughter, tho' the Grief of your sober thinking Friends! Moreover, Is there not Danger of Others being seduced by your Example, into the paths of the Destroyer; particularly Young Persons, Children, Apprentices & Servants? Will not such be apt to (nay do they not already) follow you to the Tavern? And if you tarry late, will not they too? And if you have your free Conversation, will not they have their foolish Jesting, & corrupt Communication? And if you take your Glass freely, tho' perhaps never to scandalous Besotment; will not they be in danger of drinking to a vile Excess? And still call it but good Fellowship, and colour all over with your Example, imagining they have your Patronage! O how shocking the Tho't! Dwell upon it, we pray you, till you feel the force of it; & let it be an abiding powerful Restraint upon you.

Suppose you are either strong to drink Wine; or are really abstemious, do always keep within the bounds of Temperance, and are able to stand in the Hour of Temptation: yet by your Example you may draw others into a Snare, who perhaps think they may with Security follow you; but alas! the Temptation proves too hard for 'em, & often miserably foils them. — Again, Suppose You have your Conversation chiefly with sober Friends, & by that means are not so much in danger; yet others that are seduced by your Example, may fall into bad Company; of which there's generally no great Scarcity any where, but in places of Diversion almost always a Plenty.

And

And some have, it may be, the *first* time they went to a Tavern, met there the Instruments of their Ruin.

In a word, Admit your Tavern-meetings to be in themselves lawful & innocent; yet if they become an *occasion of Sin* unto others, & you thereby cast a *stumbling Block* before the Weak, you must certainly allow, you *ought* to forbear. In matters of strict and absolute Duty indeed, we know of no Obligation upon Men to forbear, lest others should take Offence, and make an ill Improvement of our Example. Yet in Cases of Indifference, in matters of Liberty, the Rule will hold. *Take heed then lest by any means this Liberty of yours become a stumbling Block to others.* For if any see Thee which *hast Knowledge*, customarily sitting at meat or taking your Glass in the Tavern; shall not the Conscience of him that is *weak*, be embolden'd to take the like Liberty, and being too weak to encounter the Temptation, fall into Sin? But when ye sin so *against the Brethren*, & wound their weak Conscience, ye sin against *CHRIST*. Wherefore (saith the Apostle *, whole words, you are sensible, we apply in this Case) *If Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my Brother to offend.* I know (says he) and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing Unclean of it self:—Yet it is forbidden Fruit, and evil to that Man who eateth *with Offence*. It is good neither to eat Flesh, nor to drink Wine, nor so much as sit in a Tavern, if thereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. In this Abuse of our Liberty we shall sin against the Lord *CHRIST*, their Lord & ours: hereby we shall gratify & serve the Devil, and expose our selves to the Displeasure of Heaven. Hereby we shall become Partakers of other Men's Sins; which (unless Repentance prevent) will be so many dreadful Items to inflame our future Reckoning, and carry up our last Account to an amazing height. *WOE to that Man by whom Offences come!* O let us dread a share in that *Woe* †. Wherefore if thy *Right Hand* cause thee to offend, *Cut it off*, and cast it from

* 1 Cor. 8. 9, &c. Rom. 14. 14, &c. † Mat. 18. 7, 8. thee;

thee; and abstain from the Appearance of Evil *; that ye may be blameless & harmless, the Sons of GOD, unrebukable in the midst of a crooked & perverse Generation, & shining as Lights in the World †, that others seeing your good Works, & beholding your chaste Conversation coupled with Fear, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven ‡, may be ashamed of their own evil Deeds, and by your Example be put upon Reformation, & provoked to a virtuous, wise, and circumspect Behaviour.

Eighthly, Should it not be a moving Consideration with you, That this customary going to the Tavern is matter of Grief to your Ministers, who watch for your Souls, and to many serious Christian Neighbours about you?

They are not a few precise & humorous Persons, that disapprove of this Custom; but many of the more sober and watchful & wise Christians among us, *behold you and are grieved*. Now as Charity requires that we mourn the Sins of others; so it requires that we *bear one another's burdens* || Hence then, if any of your Christian Neighbours (& especially if many of them) are burden'd with Grief & Shame, for your (supposed) Sin, in needless sitting at a Tavern —, Verily Christian Charity obliges you to forbear the taking such a Liberty. Allow that really, and abstracting from Circumstances, it is not a Sin in you: yet there is not in every Man that Knowledge. And the Apostle has expressly determin'd, *If thy Brother be grieved with thy Liberty, now walkest thou not charitably* *.

One very justly observes, "It is to be consider'd that
" in judging of the Lawfulness of a Diversion, I ought
" not to be concluded by my single Opinion, contrary
" to the sense of other pious & good People. Tho'
" my Judgment is not to be determin'd by theirs, but
" by the Evidence of the Thing; yet I humbly con-
" ceive (says our Author) it is but fit *their Judgment*

* 1 Thes. 5. 22. † Phil. 2. 15. ‡ Matth. 5. 16.

|| Gal. 6. 2. * Rom. 14. 15.

" shou'd have some Influence on *my Practice*. Charity
 " obliges me to show so much Regard to the Peace
 " of a Fellow-Christian, as not to grieve him by doing
 " an Action he thinks displeasing to GOD, and which
 " might be as well omitted. — And then (he goes
 " on) I wou'd propose it to your further Thots, whe-
 " ther it be not a Duty to stand more upon your Re-
 " putation, than to part with any portion of it, for
 " the sake of a Diversion ; and whether we ought
 " not to value more the Esteem of good Christians,
 " than to forfeit it rather than forego the Use of our
 " lawful Liberty in a matter of Recreation only. — " With
 " all this remember *Paul's* Exhortation, *Phil. 4. 8.*
 " where among other marks & characters of those
 " things that he recommends to our practice, this is
 " one, *That they be of good Report* —. Tho' I defer
 " not so much to *Opinion & Custom*, as to think they
 " can alter the intrinsic Nature of Actions ; so that
 " Vertue shall become Vice, or Vice Vertue : yet
 " I can't forbear being of the mind, That an Action
 " in it self indifferent, may become by Accident sinful,
 " when stamp'd with an ill Name by general Suffrage
 " or by a number of Conscientious Christians.

We pray you now apply this to the Case we are upon.
 And we beseech you, for *others* sake (if you can't be
 persuaded for your own) immediately to desist from
 the culpable Practice, which is an occasion of so much
 Grief unto many of your serious Friends & Neighbors.
 GOD is our Record, how greatly we long after you
 all in the Bowels of CHRIST, and that we have
 heaviness in our Hearts on your Account. If there-
 fore there be any Bowels & Mercies in you, Fulfil ye
 our Joy, and relieve us from our Burden, by a speedy
 Reformation. Thus by the love you bear to us, we per-
 suade you.

But to proceed, —

In the next place, The Practice we are reprov-
 ing, isn't it what your *pious Fore-fathers* were very much
 Strangers to? *Your selves* know how ye ought to be
 followers of them, who thro' Faith & Patience inherit
 the Promises ; to follow them in the Things that are
 pure

pure & lovely! But now Judge within your selves: Do you not think, in this unhappy Practice, you've widely departed from the Example of *New-England's* Primitive Times? Do you not shew a Spirit very different from that which possess'd the first Generations of GOD's People in this Land? Did They (think you) so frequent Drinking-Houses, and customarily trifle away their Evenings there, as many now a-days do? Alas! Are we thus quickly turning out of the good Way, which our Fathers walked in! Do we thus early rise, & corrupt our Doings! Some of you that give into this Custom, have perhaps had eminently pious Ancestors, in whose Lives no such Vanity was to be seen. And may you not well *blush* to think how their Example reproaches you, and what a different Figure (in this regard,) you make from them! Return, we beseech you, and see & ask for the *Old Paths*, the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your Souls.

Indeed, (to go on,) We can't but suppose that your own *Minds* have secretly twitch'd & *upbraided* you at times before now, for your misconduct in this matter. We appeal to you; Has not Conscience, in some moments of serious Reflection, and particularly when you have sometimes heard this Custom borne Testimony against, by your faithful Reprovers, begun to smite you! And have you not under such Convictions entertain'd some thought of leaving off the evil Practice; yea & perhaps forborne for a Season? Yet have you not return'd to the old Wont? But *why have ye done this?* Were those inward Rebukes (think ye) from *above*, Fruits of the *Holy Spirit*, or not? Surely you can't imagine them to be from *beneath*, Productions of an *Evil Spirit*. The Devil is unquestionably more a Friend to the sinful Custom (in which so many are like to be ensnar'd) than to be the Author of those good Dispositions — And if they were (as they must needs be) Motions of the *Holy Spirit*; then consider, You must give an Account to GOD, of the Sights and Affronts you have put upon Him, by *quenching His Spirit*, and resisting the Checks & Warnings of Conscience.

science. Oh! Why will you thus struggle with your faithful Monitor, withstand your blessed Sanctifier, and grieve the Comforter, whereby you are sealed to the Day of Redemption! Beloved, if there be any Fellowship of the Spirit, we beseech you hearken to his Voice, even to Day, while it is called to day; fall in with his holy Suggestions; suffer not your selves to continue in that which your own solid Thoughts do & cannot but disallow, lest haply ye be found even to *fight against GOD*. We intreat you, do not shut your Eyes against the Light. Don't resist Conviction, nor shift it off by trifling Pretences. It has been well observ'd, "There is no Sin so heinous, so odious, but a *resolved Custom* in it will do much towards the *reconciling* of the Judgment to it; so as that either it is tho't *no Sin* at all, or but a *little one*. And thus if it be not justified, yet it is *palliated & excus'd*; and Conscience, which shou'd be of Council for the Government to detect and prosecute the Sin, is retain'd on the other side, and becomes an Advocate for the Sin". We intreat you Don't set your selves to study *Excuses*, as the manner of some is. For verily all the Fig-leaves you can sew together, will not make a Covering broad or thick enough to hide the Shame.—Some of you may perhaps urge the Power of *Custom*; that it's what you have long us'd your selves to, & can't tell how to leave it off—But alas! *That* only argues you the more guilty, and that you've the more need to hasten your Repentance, and resolutely strive to break off the evil Habit. Remember this, & *shew your selves Men*.

Some it may be will urge *Example & Fashion*; that it's the Custom of the Place, and they wou'd not affect Singularity—To which we reply, Tho' it be indeed growing too much the Mode, yet Thanks be to GOD, there are many sober & watchful Christians among us still that eschew the Evil; a number sufficient to rescue you from the dreaded Imputation of Singularity. But suppose the Case were otherwise, the Commonness of the Practice, if it be a Sin, will not excuse you in it. 'Tis too great a Complement to any Fashion, to follow it at the expence of a good Conscience.

Conscience & the Credit of your Profession. Better be singular than fin. 'Tis the Word of GOD that is our Rule; not the Example of Men, however great or good. And *that* expressly says, † *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*.—

Again, Some it may be will plead, They are led away by *enticing Company*.— But alas! This will never justify you. Are you not solemnly caution'd & charg'd in the Word of GOD †, *Make no friendship with a vicious Man, lest thou learn his ways, & get a Snare to thy Soul*.— *My Son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Forsake the Foolish & live. Withdraw your selves from every Brother, that walketh disorderly. Note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed*.—These are the Warnings of GOD. And if thou obeyest them, thou shalt be wise for thy self; but if thou scornest, *thou alone shalt bear it*. The Sins you are drawn into by others, are your own. Tho' Sinners entice, they cannot *compel* you; but if overcome when tempted, you are really drawn aside of your own *Lusts* ||; and every man shall finally bear his own *Burden* *. 'Tis a vain Plea then, & carries in it not the least Colour of an Excuse, to say, That you are drawn in by Company.—What tho' they may be your kind *Benefactors*? Their Gifts shou'd not blind your Eyes, and allure you to have fellowship with them in any unfruitful Works of Darknes. What tho' they are your generous *Employers*, & your Dependence may be very much upon them for Business & a Livelihood, and they'l be displeas'd if you don't humour 'em in such matters; yet *be not ye Partakers with them* †. For the *Eyes of the LORD* are over the Righteous;— and *who is he that will harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is Good?* But and if ye suffer for Righteousness sake, happy are ye; & *be not afraid of their Terror, neither be troubled* †. What tho' they think it strange that you run not with them —, speaking Evil of

† *Exod.* 23. 2. † *Prov.* 22. 24, 25. *Chap.* 1. 10.—9. 6.
2 *Thess.* 3. 6. || *Jam.* 1. 14. * *Gal.* 6. 5. † *Eph.* 5.
7, 11. † 1 *Pet.* 3. 12, &c.

you, and frowning upon you, and perhaps doing you some Diskindness: Yet if any Man suffer as a Christian * let him not be ashamed nor afraid. The Fear of Man is too often in this Case undoubtedly, as well as in others, a Snare, especially to young Beginners in the World. But my Son, fear thou GOD: for he that feareth GOD, shall come forth of them all. Ye are bought with a Price: be ye not the Servants of Men ¶.

In a word, Some it may be will plead Necessity, or at least great Conveniency in the Case, with regard to the Ends of their Calling & Business:---Upon which we shall observe to you, That there are Others among us, Merchants, Shop-keepers, Tradesmen, &c. that have perhaps as much Business & as good Success as you; who yet don't attend your Evening-Conversations at the Tavern, and do but seldom, if ever, transact any Business there. Now these are Witnesses against you, and must stop your Mouths, as to the Plea of Necessity, or any great Expediency in the matter.---Indeed all will allow Publick Houses to be necessary or at least convenient, for Travellers & Strangers. But we think the Case is vastly different, as to Town-Inhabitants, who are at home, and have Houses of their own, which are sufficient in ordinary Cases —. However, we will readily allow, that Town-Dwellers may sometimes find a Conveniency in having a publick House at hand to step into upon Occasion. Nevertheless, it do's not follow, that you may go thither, when Necessity do'sn't compel, nor any great & manifest Accommodation or Advantage invite you. For that may be innocent & lawful, when done occasionally & transiently, upon some particular & extraordinary Emergence; which becomes criminal & scandalous, when it grows to a Custom, and is done unnecessarily ———. But then we fear concerning many, It is not Business, that carries 'em to the Tavern, especially in the Evenings which they so often spend there; but they go for the sake of free Conversation & Pastime, as they call it; if not driven by more sordid Appetites. Alas! How egregiously are public

* 1 Pet. 4. 16. ¶ 1 Cor. 7. 23-

Houses generally perverted from the true Design of them! For, as we fear, Taverns are multiply'd among us, beyond the bounds of real Necessity, and even to a Fault, if not a Scandal; so likewise that too many of them prove Nurseries of Vice, being prostituted by Multitudes to an ill use, even the serving of divers Lusts and Pleasures, which war against the Soul, or at best the wasting away of many precious Hours in unprofitable Amusements!

However, Let what Good or Advantage you will, be pretended, by these Evening-Interviews at Publick Houses, we apprehend if matters be duely weighed, that the Evils & Inconveniencies & Temptations that attend them, will vastly preponderate & more than countervail. And let us tell you, If you will immediately Reform, we are persuaded This will be *no Grief nor Offence of Heart unto you*, as *Abigail* in another case said to *David*. And O that we may have the same Success that she had in her Reproof! We hope that some of you at least, will give an affectionate & thankful Reception to us, as *David* to his Reprover, saying, "Blessed be the Lord GOD of *Israel*, which sent thee this Day to meet me: and blessed be thy Advice, & blessed be thou which hast kept me back from sinning!

But, to conclude, Whatever your Apprehensions are now, or have been, we are persuaded that a *Dying Hour* will bring with it very melancholy Reflections upon your Conduct in this matter, if you don't seasonably recover your selves.

O for the Tho'ts of *dying Men*, in this important Case!

Realise it, Sirs, that you are hastning to the Grave, and stand upon the amazing Brink of *ETERNITY*. Consider the Uncertainty of Life; and think seriously with your selves, What if Death shou'd lay it's awful Arrests upon you the *next Time* you are at a Tavern-Interview! Is the Tavern a Place you wou'd be willing to meet Death in? How dare you run the Risque, that *That shall be the last place you'l be at*, before
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the dreadful Summons be serv'd upon you, to *set your House in order & DIE!* — What is the Language of your evil Custom? Is it not that, *Soul! take thine Ease; eat, drink, & be merry!* But O Man, what if one Evening or other GOD should say to you, *This Night shall thy Soul be required of thee!* * Oh! How wou'd your *Thoughts* (like *Belsazzar's* †, when he saw the hand-writing on the Wall) *trouble you, and your Knees smite one against another!*

We beseech you think what are like to be your *Reflections* upon *mispent Time*, and particularly on your *Tavern-Hours*, when you are got into the *near View* of a future State, & have the King of Terrors staring you in the face; when your *Lives* are hovering over the Mouth of the Pit, & your *Souls* are just upon taking wing to make their appearance before the dread Tribunal of a Righteous GOD; whose all-seeing Eye is now continually upon you; compassing your Path and your *Lying down* ‡ —, and who will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, *whether good or evil* || — When Death & Judgment are come near, and seem to have taken hold of you; Do you think you shall retain the *Relish* of your *Tavern-Conversation*, or have a pleasing Memory of the Time devour'd by it? Verily we believe this evil Custom will then appear to your enlightned eyes in it's true & base Colours, and in dreadful Shapes: and the Remembrance of it will be as a piercing Arrow to your guilty Breasts.

You may perhaps baffle Conscience for the present with one *Excuse* and another; (and it may be some will pass off this our Address with a *vain Laugh*, and treat it with Neglect or vent their angry Resentments :) but when you come to lie upon a Death-bed, if Conscience be awake, we are persuaded this will read loud Lessons of Reproof & Terror to you, silence all the frivolous Pleas you now indulge to, and make you wish you had *inclined your Ear to the voice of your*

* Luke 12. 20. † Dan. 5. 6. ‡ Psal. 139. 3. || Eccl. 12. 14.
Teachers

Teachers †. Then the Sin you now make light of, will sit heavy upon your Tho'ts, and be a grievous Burden to you. Tho' now it be sweet to your Mouths, and roll'd under your Tongues as a pleasant Morfel, yet 'twill be Bitterness in the latter end, even as the Gall of Asps, yea more bitter than Death. And when your Hearts are pricked within you, will not the Psalmist's Reflection ‡ be yours, ——— *So foolish was I, & ignorant, yea even as a Beast before God!* Will you not be ready to confess with Saul || ——— *I have played the Fool and erred exceedingly!* ——— Have you not heard of some that have gone out of the World in the midst of those bitter Exclamations, *Ale-houses are Hell-houses!* *Ale-houses are Hell-houses!* And of others that have made that doleful Outcry, --- *Call back Time, Oh! Call back Time:* but alas! found it too late to redeem the precious Hours they had so profusely thrown away!

O think, we beseech you, think what will be the Fruit of this Course you are in. Verily the Best Issue you can expect is that you will sooner or later *Repent* of it. And will you act so foolish a part as wilfully to make your selves work for Repentance! Do but consider the Nature of Repentance; what Anxiety, and Shame, and Grief, and Fear it implies: and it should seem you can't be willing to purchase a little Pleasure at so dear a rate.--- *Knowing the Terror of the Lord,* we perswade you ———. O be wise in time: Seeing the Error of your way, instantly resolve upon Reformation.

Now take up those wise and good Purposes, which you can't but think you'll be ready to make on a Sick-Bed. Be peremptory and solemn in your Resolutions: and immediately put them in practice. Be stedfast & immovable. Watch & Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation. Carefully guard against every thing that will tend to insnare you: and in particular, take heed that a false Modesty, an easy Humour, and Complaisance to Company don't betray you.

† Prov. 5. 13. ‡ Psal. 73, 22. || 1 Sam. 26. 21.

Fortify your selves against all Inticements, by carrying proper serious Tho'ts about with you continually ; by frequently renewing your solemn Vows, and daily committing your selves to the Keeping of Divine Grace.

Thus we have shew'd our Opinion, and given you our faithful Advice. We now commend you to GOD who has all Hearts in his Hand ; and beseech Him to crown this our Endeavour with the desired Success, by his effectual Blessing.

However, we humbly trust it will turn to us for *Testimony*. AMEN !

AP



APPENDIX.

THERE has fallen into our hands a private Letter of the late Reverend Dr. *Increase Matther's*, upon the Subject of the foregoing Pages, written to one of his Neighbours : A Copy of which we think fit to annex ; and *by it, He being dead, yet speaketh,*

'Tis as follows :

Brother —

ALTHO' I am fuller of Business than I have been (to my knowledge) ever since my coming to *Boston*, yet out of respect to my *Word*, and my Love to *You*, I send you the following short Answer, to the *Question*, upon which you desired my Apprehensions.

QUESTION,

WHETHER it be Lawful for a Church-Member among us, to be frequently in Taverns ?

ANSWER,

In the following PROPOSITIONS,

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I. It

I. It is *not* Lawful for a Church-Member to be in *Taverns* oftner than *Necessity* calleth for it.

And this is evident,

1. Because we are to *Abstain from all Appearance of Evil*, 1 *Thes.* V. 22. *Jude* 23. Now, This has an *Appearance of Evil*. It looks something like being a *Pot-Companion*.

2. Because we must avoid all *Temptations to Sin*. Where any Evil is *forbidden*, it is *required* that the *Temptations* leading to that Evil, should be shunned. Therefore the Rule that forbids *Drunkenness*, does also prohibit being unnecessarily where there is much *Drink* a going, that may be a *Temptation to Excess*. *Gen.* XXXIX. 10. *Prov.* V. 8.

3. Because we must, as much as may be, avoid the giving of *Occasion unto others to Sin*. Yea, a Christian should abridge himself of his *lawful Liberty*, if it prove an *Occasion* for others to Sin against G O D. And therefore the Apostle forbids Eating in an *Idols Temple*: Not but that it was in it self Lawful to Eat *there*, or in any other Place; because no Places under the *Gospel* are either Holy or Profane, as under the *Law*: but because some would by that means be occasioned to commit *Idolatry*, and be hardned in Sin, 1 *Cor.* VIII. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

II. For Church-Members to *Chuse* to transact their *Civil Affairs* in the *Tavern*, when they might as well do it at their own Houses, is an Evil in the Sight of GOD.

For,

1. They occasion others to Sin against G O D. The more Carnal sort of People will say, *Such and such* are often in *Taverns*, for all they make a *Profession of Religion*, and are *Members of Churches*. Thus the way of Truth is evil spoken of. And tho' Godly

Godly Persons may go into the *Tavern* for lawful Ends, to dispatch their lawful Affairs, yet the *Un-godly* will from thence take Advantage to follow *Taverns* for unlawful Ends, even to *Drink* and be *Drunken* there. Now, a Christian should be very Tender of being so much as an Occasion of Dishonour to GOD, or of wrong to the Souls of any. 2 Sam. XII. 14. 1 Sam. XXII. 22. Rom. XIV. 13. Gal. V. 13. 1 Tim. V. 14. 1 Joh. II. 10.

Yea, Christians should endeavour to walk so as to cut off all *occasion* of Evil-speaking, or Evil-thinking, or Evil-doing, from them that are so Wicked as to seek Occasion. 2 Cor. XI. 12.

2. When Men do thus *unnecessarily* frequent *Taverns*, it may be just with GOD, to leave them to fall into Sin. If a Man wilfully forsake GOD in never so small a matter, he may well fear that GOD will forsake him. 2 Chron. XV. 2. Psal. LXXXI. 11, 12.

III. IT is not unlawful for a Church-Member to go into the *Tavern*, when the Business of his Civil Calling does *necessarily* Call him thereunto.

And this is evident,

1. Because a *Tavern* is not in it self an *unlawful Place*. We read of *Inns* in the Scripture; and of Good Men that when called thereunto, have gone into them. Gen. XLII. 27. Exod. IV. 24. Luk. II. 7.

2. Because the Duties of a Man's *General*, and of his *Particular* Calling, may stand well together. A Man's *General* Calling, as he is a Christian, does not Nullify, but rather Confirm his *Particular* Calling, and makes it sanctified unto him. *** 1 Cor. VII. 20. — V. 12.

IV. If a Church-Member be Necessitated to be in the *Tavern*, he ought to carry himself *Circumspectly* there.

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The Reason is,

1. Because he is in *more danger* of sinning there, than at other times; by means of divers Temptations that are before him.

2. Because by a Circumspect and Holy Carriage, others may be drawn to glorify GOD, and *do likewise*.
Matth. V. 16. 1 Pet. II. 12.—III. 1.

Thus I have given you a brief Answer to your Enquiry. The Lord be with you, and guide you into all ways of well-pleasing before Him!
I am,

Your loving Friend,

Increase Mather.

2 JY 61



